

THE AMERICA I BELIEVE IN

Almost every American is taught from an early age to recite the Pledge of Allegiance by heart, but how many actually know it by heart? Most people don't think twice about what the words really mean.

The first phrase says, "I pledge allegiance," meaning we personally, solemnly promise loyalty, dedication, devotion, honor, and obedience. The next phrase says, "to the flag, of the United States of America" so we aren't just promising these to just anyone, but to the people of our country. All those who fought for freedom in the American Revolution against Britain, the Civil War to stop slavery, and in the war that's going on right now in the Middle East to protect our rights from those who want to take it away from us. The America I believe in consists of keeping our promises to our country and our loyalty to what our flag stands for.

The phrase of the pledge that says, "and to the Republic for which it stands" means in addition to pledging for allegiance, we pledge to a government by the people, for the people, and in the interests of the people because the country of America belongs to the people. "One Nation" means we are together as one country; we are not divided by our beliefs, race, gender, or political party, we are together as one. I believe that our whole country can come together as a team because that is what we really are, but that will not be possible unless we set aside our differences and treat each other as one of our team members, with kindness and respect. "Under God" means we are covered by the Holy Father, and if He thinks our country is worth protecting, then it must be worth coming together for as one team.

"Indivisible with liberty and justice for all" means we are inseparable with independence and integrity for as long as our country is complete. The America I believe in consists of not giving away or letting go of our freedoms that we fought for and worked hard for as one undivided nation.

The America I believe in is powerful, respectful, and we are a team. I believe America is the country we make it. Working together, we can make it the country that the writers of the Pledge of Allegiance saw it as so many years ago.●

RECOGNIZING EIGHT MAINE HOSPITALS RECEIVING THE LEAPFROG GROUP'S TOP HOSPITAL AWARD

● Mr. KING. Mr. President, today I wish to recognize the eight Maine hospitals being awarded the Leapfrog Group's Top Hospital Award. I am proud of the work that our State's medical institutions have done to attain the highest standards of hospital quality and safety. St. Mary's Regional received the Top General Hospital Award, and Bridgton Hospital, Charles A. Dean Memorial Hospital, LincolnHealth, Mayo Regional Hospital, Pen Bay Medical Center, Sebasticook Valley Health, and Stephens Memorial Hospital received the Top Rural Hospital Award.

The Leapfrog Group is an independent hospital watchdog group, working with hospitals around the country to discover and recognize the top performers. The surveys they conduct compare hospitals' performance "on national standards of patient safety, quality, efficiency, and manage-

ment structures that prevent errors, providing the most comprehensive picture of how patients fare at individual institutions." These rigorous standards have been used to vet thousands of hospitals across the Nation, and these eight Maine facilities have proven themselves worthy of recognition. The standards, quality, and safety that these hospitals have exhibited is emblematic of the work ethic and of the values that make Maine such a great place. As such, they contribute to Maine business's storied legacy of dedication to quality and high standards.

The people of our country depend on the efficient and quality functioning of health centers, and these eight Maine hospitals have proven their great commitment to quality care. Thanks to their continued efforts, individuals and families across the State of Maine have access to much-needed services—and the entire State is stronger because of it. The work of these hospitals serve as a shining example that I hope will be emulated across the State of Maine and the Nation, as all Americans deserve access to health care facilities with a strong track record of quality service and commitment to excellence.

I congratulate these eight Maine hospitals for their work providing high quality crucial health care services to the people of Maine and thank them for their pursuit of excellence. I am proud of these great Maine institutions and look forward to their continued success.●

REMEMBERING BRIGADIER GENERAL ROSANNE BAILEY

● Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, today I wish to honor the memory of Brig. Gen. Rosanne Bailey, U.S. Air Force, Retired. General Bailey, who was known simply as "Ro," passed away on November 2, 2016.

Ro began her Air Force career through the ROTC program at Purdue University, where she earned a BS in industrial management from the Krannert School of Management. In 2005, she received the Krannert School's "Distinguished Alumni Award."

As an Air Force officer, Ro held significant positions in acquisition and logistics before assuming command level responsibilities. Before retiring, Ro served as commander of the 435th Air Base Wing at Ramstein AFB in Germany and as commander of the Cheyenne Mountain Operations Center in Colorado Springs.

One of the stops along Ro's distinguished Air Force career was Eielson Air Force Base near Fairbanks, AK, where Ro served as commander of the 354th Logistics Group from 1996-1998. Following her retirement from the Air Force, Ro returned to interior Alaska to accept a series of executive positions at the University of Alaska Fairbanks.

In 2006, she was named vice chancellor for administrative services. Two

years later, she became involved in the university's efforts to develop a niche in unmanned aerial systems. Her initial position was special projects manager for unmanned aircraft and rocket launch support in 2008.

Ro's success in that position led the University of Alaska Board of Regents to create the Alaska Center for Unmanned Aircraft Systems Integration in 2012. Ro was named deputy director of the center. She was instrumental in writing the proposal that created the Pan-Pacific UAS Test Range Complex, which is one of only seven FAA-approved unmanned aircraft system test sites in the Nation. Leading the center during the difficult early years, she left her mark on the unmanned aircraft industry.

She was also active in the interior Alaska community as a commissioner of the Steese Fire District and an elder of the First Presbyterian Church of Fairbanks.

Ro's passing is a great loss to her many friends in the UAS world, at the University of Alaska, and in the broader interior Alaska community. I was privileged to know Ro and am grateful for that opportunity.

Thank you for the opportunity to celebrate the life of Ro Bailey today in the U.S. Senate.

REMEMBERING RICHARD JOHNSON AND TRIBUTE TO PAT JOHNSON

● Mr. NELSON. Mr. President, I rise today to recognize the late Richard Salisbury Johnson, Sr., and his wife, Patsy Ann Seaton Johnson, for their contributions to the betterment of Palm Beach County, FL.

Richard, Pat, and their families have been a part of the Palm Beach County community for decades. Both Pat and Richard were born in West Palm Beach. Richard's great-grandfather arrived on Lake Worth in the early 1880s, and his father worked in the historic 1916 Palm Beach County Court House. Pat's family moved to the area in 1928. Today, the family still owns the Johnson Farm in Pahokee.

Through the years, the philanthropy of Richard and Pat Johnson has benefited healthcare and education through many organizations, including the Rehabilitation Center for Children and Adults and the Brady Urological Institute at Johns Hopkins University. At Duke University Medical Center, they established the Richard and Pat Johnson University Professorship in Cardiovascular Genomics and both sat on the board. In addition, Pat has chaired many events for St. Mary's Medical Center, where Richard served as board chair for over a decade. Palm Beach Atlantic College honored Richard with the American Free Enterprise Medal in 1995 and recognized Pat with its Women of Distinction Award in 2001.

With a shared vision and extraordinary generosity, Richard and Pat committed to opening a museum to share their local history. They turned